

Notice of Exemption

To:
Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
[CEQA Submit](#)

From:
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Central Region
1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, California 93710



Project Title: Anzar Road Culvert Emergency Repair Project (Project) (Incidental Take Permit, 2081-2025-035-R4)

Project Location: United States (US) Route 101, postmile 4.2 to 4.5 near Anzar Road in San Benito County.

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has issued an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) No. 2081-2025-035-04 authorizing Caltrans to incidentally take California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) which is designated as a threatened species under the California Endangered Species Act (Fish & G. Code § 2050 et seq.; Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 670.5, subd. (b)(3)(G)).

The Project involves the emergency repair of a 7-foot diameter, approximately 1,000-foot-long corrugated metal pipe culvert that has experienced advance degradation including erosion and loss of the invert (bottom of the culvert), and a sinkhole has formed in the embankment above the culvert inlet. The Project also includes the installation of rock slope protection, replacement of flared end sections, utility relocation, equipment access and staging, vegetation trimming and removal, as well as temporary stream diversion and dewatering.

The Project is expected to cause the temporary loss of approximately 1.49 acres of upland habitat for California tiger salamander due to vegetation removal and temporary ground disturbance associated with constructing features, access, and staging. Approximately half of the impact involves removal of oak and riparian woodland habitats that are expected to take five or more years to restore species habitat to pre-construction conditions.

Public Agency Approving Project: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

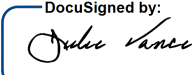
Persons or Public Agency Carrying Out Project: California Department of Transportation, District 5

Exempt Status:

- Statutory Exemption. California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15260 et seq.; Public Resources Code, section 21080, subdivision (b).
- Categorical Exemption.

Reasons why project is exempt: See Attachment

CDFW Contact Person: Mindy Trask (Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)), Mary.Trask@wildlife.ca.gov

DocuSigned by:

 Signature: _____ Date: 9/12/2025
 Julie A. Vance
 Regional Manager, Central Region

Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Attachment to Notice of Exemption

California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2025-035-04 Anzar Road Culvert Emergency Repair Project

Approval of the Anzar Road Culvert Emergency Repair Project (Project) is subject to the statutory exemption for “Specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency” (Emergency Project; Pub. Resources Code, §21080, subd. (b)(4)) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; Pub. Resources Code, §21000 et seq.). “Emergency” is defined as “A sudden, unexpected occurrence, involving a clear and imminent danger, demanding immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss of, or damage to, life, health, property, or essential public services” (Pub. Resources Code, § 21060.3).

The purpose of the Project is the repair of a 1,000-foot-long culvert located under United States (US) Route 101 postmile 4.2 to 4.5 and Anzar Road in San Benito County. This culvert has experienced advance degradation including erosion and loss of the invert (bottom of the culvert), and a sinkhole has formed in the embankment above the culvert inlet. The culvert is scheduled to be replaced in 2030. However, the Caltrans District 5 Hydraulic Engineer determined that in the current state, the culvert would suffer a catastrophic failure prior to that date if not repaired immediately. Caltrans District 5 issued a Director’s Order Request to repair the culvert this year (2025) under an Emergency Force Account, citing the reason as Public Contract Code 10122(a) “Failure or Threat of Failure of Transportation Facility, this project is needed to prevent or mitigate the loss or impairment of life, health, property, and essential public services, avoid damage up to and including loss of roadway resulting in closure.”

The Project is expected to result in temporary loss of approximately 1.49 acres of upland habitat for California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*), a species listed as threatened under the California Endangered Species Act, due to vegetation removal and temporary ground disturbance associated with constructing features, access, and staging. Approximately half of the impact involves removal of oak and riparian woodland habitats that are expected to take five or more years to restore species habitat to pre-construction conditions.

CDFW has determined that the impacts to California tiger salamander will be minimized and fully mitigated through the implementation of measures required by Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2025-035 04. Measures include: (1) permanent habitat protection; (2) establishment of avoidance zones; (3) worker education; and (4) Monthly Compliance Reports.